5 October 1982

MEMORANDUM FOR: Executive Officer, DDS&T

THROUGH: Director, Foreign Broadcast Information Service

FROM: [redacted] 25X1
Chief, Field Coverage Staff

SUBJECT: DDS&T Position on U.S. Direct Broadcast Satellite

Following is a proposed DDS&T response on the question of whether DDS&T programs and capabilities would be affected by U.S. direct broadcasts via satellite:

Those intelligence targets and activities which operate in the 26 mHz range (Soviet mobile force communications, certain late generation satellites, terrestrial public radio relay transmitters, and covert agent HF broadcasts) could be affected by direct or spurious interference from the DBS transmissions. However, DDS&T believes that the overall impact of such transmissions on DDS&T programs and capabilities would be minimal. This impact would not in itself provide sufficient justification for opposing such an effort by the U.S. Government.

As for the cost-effectiveness of such a U.S. effort, DDS&T questions whether the possible slight improvement in broadcast reception would justify the costs of such a system. Improvements in existing terrestrial transmitting facilities, at a far more modest cost, would likely be just as, or more, effective in improving the quality of the broadcasts and reaching a larger audience. A U.S. initiative to engage in international broadcasting by means of DBS would certainly be seen by the communist bloc and many Third World countries as a new form of Western interference and would be strongly opposed. Improvements in existing terrestrial transmitting capabilities, if effective, would also be unwelcome by the USSR and some other countries, but would not provoke the sort of response that we could expect if the U.S. went to a DBS system. The USSR would probably counter the DBS transmissions by increasing terrestrial jamming or by orbiting a satellite capable of jamming the DBS transmissions from outer space. In either event, the effectiveness of the U.S. transmissions would be undermined by the Soviet response.

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The likelihood of reaching a larger audience with DBS transmissions also seems a dubious proposition. We believe the USIA radio receiver survey will confirm that there is not an abundance of shortwave receivers in use in the USSR and that many in use do not have the range to monitor broadcasts on 26 mHz. While 25.67 to 26.1 mHz is designated as a broadcasting band, few countries actually use those frequencies for public broadcasting.

In brief, the DDS&T has no significant operational concern, but questions the cost-effectiveness of such a system.

SIGNED

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FBIS/Ops/FCS [redacted] 4 (5Oct82) 25X1

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